

CJAC 2003

Conversations in Critical Times



Judicial leaders have many common goals, such as protecting the independence of the branch, implementing effective administrative practices, and maintaining and enhancing public trust and confidence in the courts.

Those goals were put to the test in February at the California Judicial Administration Conference (CJAC) in San Francisco, where court leaders from throughout the state came together to tackle issues related to governing the judicial system. Centered on the theme “Judicial Branch Governance in Critical Times—Challenges and Opportunities,” the conference provided a forum for policy discussions on protecting the integrity and independence of the judicial branch through accountability and efficient use of statewide resources.

Speakers, panels, and workshops focused on both the need to think and act as a cohesive statewide branch of government and the need for local courts to remain responsive to their communities. These sessions raised ideas and concerns about which court practices should be managed at the state level and which would be better placed under local control. Underlying all the discussions was the critical need to resolve these issues in the face of the current and impending budget challenges.

COURTS SHARE VALUABLE IDEAS, CONCERNS

The most interactive portions of the week’s events were the daily breakout sessions. The 20 to 30 participants in each session consisted of a mix of justices, judges, appellate court clerk/administrators, and executive officers from both large and small courts.

Session facilitators asked participants to discuss issues related to judicial branch governance and statewide versus local control of court practices. Court leaders shared their honest perspectives on the issues

and challenges common to all courts. Representatives of the Judicial Council and the AOC listened to their suggestions and concerns.

CONTINUING THE DIALOGUE

One of the main goals of CJAC organizers was to have the conference spark conversation, generate ideas, and facilitate information gathering. To that end, AOC staff members took notes to capture the substance of the breakout sessions, including the comments and concerns raised by court leaders.

In the week following CJAC, the AOC leaders and staff who had attended met to discuss what they had heard from court leaders, how to use that information to improve their services, and how to work in partnership with them.

POST-CJAC RESOURCES

The AOC is putting together a “post-CJAC” package of information and materials that is scheduled to be distributed in April. The package will include:

- ❑ A videotape overview of the event, including commentary from the chairs of the planning committee;
- ❑ A summary of key points and discussion topics;
- ❑ Speeches presented at the conference, including that of Judge Roger K. Warren, President of the National Center for State Courts; and
- ❑ A how-to document for court leaders that will provide ideas for using the materials in their courts.

The AOC invites feedback on the post-CJAC materials and on any resulting conversations between court leaders and their staffs.

● For more information, contact the AOC’s Education Division, 415-865-7745. ■



Superior Court of Tuolumne County Presiding Judge Eric L. Du Temple (left) addressed the audience during a panel discussion titled “Thinking and Acting as a Branch in Critical Times: Challenges and Opportunities.” The session provided an overview of some of the issues surrounding branchwide governance. The panel, consisting of members of the Judicial Council as well as representatives of the courts, spoke of the challenges of integrating a statewide system of governance. Panel members also stressed the need to develop some statewide standards while being careful not to create an overly homogenized system.



The breakout sessions that were held on both days of the conference allowed court leaders to engage in an open dialogue about the issue of statewide versus local governance. Presiding justices and judges, executive officers, and appellate court clerk/administrators shared ideas with each other and with the Judicial Council and the AOC. Facilitators asked participants to consider a variety of questions about branchwide governance. Discussions focused on such topics as case management systems, staffing standards, security, accounting, and human resources.



On the second day of the conference, a panel made up of members of the CJAC Oversight and Planning Committees who had participated in the first day’s breakout sessions presented to the entire audience ideas and concerns raised during those sessions. They reported that the discussions had brought up many good ideas and an equal number of challenges in regard to deciding which court practices should be statewide and which should be left to local control.

Guest speaker Judge Roger K. Warren, President of the National Center for State Courts, spoke about judicial branch governance. He provided participants with a national perspective on how states govern their court systems, and advised attendees that “governing is steering the boat, not rowing it.” Judge Warren urged judicial leaders, as they approach the issue of developing a governing model for California’s legal system, to keep the process participatory and open, engaging the courts, other justice agencies, and the public.



ON LEADERSHIP

Leadership Defined

MATTHEW S. RICHTER

The facts: We are in the middle of a budget crisis. We have more work now than ever before. The future of how we do business is unclear. We must continue to serve the public. We have great people working toward that goal. We need leadership in order to get there.

Fortunately, we already have some pretty darn good leadership. We need more. And in order to generate more leaders, we need to first understand what leadership is and what we need to do to foster it.

Defining leadership can be difficult. There is a myriad of classes, books, seminars, and articles that ardently define their versions of leadership. An analysis of these definitions, though, reveals that leadership can be a vague or overreaching concept.

However, there are some commonalities in the schools of thought. Most people agree that leaders have passion; they have a vision that they communicate to their followers; and they have a values system that illustrates how to get to that vision. Positive leadership weaves all three attributes into a cohesive tapestry. Passion is the artistry, vision is the template, and values are the thread that binds it all together. It's these three grand areas of leadership we'll explore in this column in the coming months.

PASSION

Think, for a moment, of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have A Dream" speech. That speech changed lives through the vision it inspired, through the values of equality and fairness it engendered, and mostly through the passion it radiated. Great, heroic leaders in history such as Franklin D. Roosevelt, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr., had passion and inspired people toward high levels of fervor, fueled by admiration in their followers and by hatred in their opponents. Passion is often intrinsic, beginning as a seedling deep within a person, catalyzed and provoked by a leader's desire to move the crowd. Passion is two-way, the leader melding his or her own zeal with that of the crowd, instigating movement in a common direction.

VISION

Leadership requires a vision. More than an image in someone's head, vision is a complete understanding of the big picture, of where you are in that picture, and of where you want to go. Leadership guru Stan Slap says that the vision should be a better place than where we are today. It should be a clearly communicable picture of the future, steeped in values and philosophy as well as in structure.

A clear vision provides direction and establishes purpose.

For example, at the Center for Judicial Education and Research, we have a clear vision of curriculum development. We know what our curricula will look like three years from now. When a problem arises, our vision facilitates a solution. When our vision is challenged by outside forces, we have the structural strength to defend it. A clear vision is not always shared by all; it doesn't have to be. The vision belongs to the leader, and others work with the leader to find the best way to get to it. Great visionary thinking utilizes a symbiotic relationship between leader and team that fosters collaboration, innovation, and camaraderie.

VALUES

Finally, leaders have a set of values that set the standard for attaining their vision. These values are the "rules" that go beyond a descriptive term such as integrity or results orientation. In fact, words like *integrity* have become so overused in values statements that they can be rendered meaningless. True values need to contain deeper meanings, an application within the context of the organization, and a passion for adhering to them. The exercise of generating values organizationally is pointless unless either the organization is willing to change its culture to fit the values or, conversely, the values are actual descriptions of the current organizational culture.

As we look to individuals in the courts to rise to the challenge, we must recognize that leadership requires hard work. It requires all of us to realize the judicial system's passion, vision, and values. Leadership in the 21st century, leadership in the courts, is a

robust and dynamic relationship that must be cared for and respected. Let's make it so.

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This is the first in a Court News series on leadership. Please contact Matt with article ideas, feedback, or suggestions at matthew.richter@jud.ca.gov. ■

Juvenile Courts Turn 100



At the California Judicial Administration Conference in San Francisco, Chief Justice Ronald M. George signed and displayed a resolution on behalf of the Judicial Council and the California judiciary. The resolution commemorates the 100th anniversary of the state's juvenile courts. On February 26, 1903, California became the seventh state in the nation to enact a juvenile court act when Governor George Pardee signed legislation creating a court with exclusive jurisdiction over proceedings for abused, neglected, and delinquent children under age 16. The Chief Justice was accompanied at the signing by Diane Nunn, Director of the Center for Families, Children & the Courts (CFCC) (right) and Audrey Evje, an attorney in CFCC. Photo: Shelley Eades

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Chief Justice Ronald M. George (right) and Administrative Director of the Courts William C. Vickrey (not shown) fielded questions from CJAC attendees on topics related to judicial administration, including challenges related to the judicial branch budget. The question-and-answer session was moderated by CJAC Oversight Committee Chair Justice Richard D. Aldrich (left) of the Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District, and CJAC Content Committee Chair Judge Richard Strauss of the Superior Court of San Diego County.



At regional meetings led by the AOC's three regional directors, presiding judges and court executive officers discussed the topics raised at the conference and how they might affect the courts in their respective areas.



AOC staff set up information tables in the foyer, where they shared information and provided updates on programs and services available to the courts. Present were representatives from a variety of AOC program areas, including collaborative justice, human resources, finance, family law, education, grant administration, governmental affairs, and communications.

Photos: Shelley Eades